

11/12/13

I would like to share my concerns regarding the HR 5111 that is currently being discussed in the Education Committee.

What is very concerning regarding HR 5111 is the fact that there is nothing in this bill that asks the question WHY or fixes the problem. WHY are students NOT PROFICIENT? WHY do we have so many students aren't reading at grade level?

HR 5111 does not consider those with different learning needs. There are students who are English Language Learners, those who receive Special Education services and those who have Learning Disabilities, many of which are not identified as having a LD in our school systems across the state.

I would like you all to think about the non-proficient readers and the connection to students who are un-identified as having a learning disability.

I would like to introduce to you DYSLEXIA.

- What do you know about dyslexia? Think about it.
- Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties. It can also affect math as our math programs are more language based then ever.
- Dyslexia is the most researched learning disability yet it is the rarely uttered as a possible cause of reading difficulties in our schools.
- Dyslexia affects 1 in 5 people or 20% of the population
- It is hereditary
- Only 1/3 of people who are dyslexic will be identified and will qualify for special education services. When they are identified they are identified as having "Specific Learning Disability" NOT AS DYSLEXIC.
- For the 1/3 identified dyslexics who receive special education services, most will not get the scientific based intervention needed for them to be successful in reading writing and spelling.
- This leaves two-thirds of dyslexics unidentified. They will struggle with reading, writing and spelling. It will affect their grades, their self esteem, it can affect their behavior, their school career and their future. These are the students who desperately need help and remediation and are not getting it because of the system.

Our education system is failing students with dyslexia which is a learning disability.

We are a re-active society. We need to be Pro-Active! Our states need to start looking at Dyslexia as a reason WHY we have students who are not proficient in reading. We need to have pro-active measures in place which include:

- A universal definition and understanding of "dyslexia" in the state education code. Dyslexia needs to be recognized.
- Mandatory teacher training on dyslexia, its warning signs and appropriate intervention strategies. (both in our colleges and

universities and professional development for all those who teach in our school systems currently)

- Mandatory early screening/testing for dyslexia
- Mandatory scientific based remediation programs for dyslexia (Orton-Gillingham) which can be accessed by both general and special education populations.
- Access to appropriate "assistive technologies" in the public school settings for students with dyslexia
- Proper accommodations

I would ask all of you to consider a NO vote on this bill. This bill will not help any student learn how to read. Multiple studies do not support retention for low performance. In fact, it is shown that retaining results in a negative impact of a students ultimate performance and self esteem. My son is dyslexic, he will always be dyslexic. He is funny, he is smart, he is a gifted athlete yet he struggles with reading, writing, spelling and even math due to his dyslexia. He had reading interventions in first and second grade he progressed very slowly if at all. We had a child who was struggling and he finally hit the wall in third grade. It was a difficult time for him. He was identified as having dyslexia at the end of third grade after parental persistence and outside help. The interventions that were used were not the right interventions for a dyslexic. We currently go out of our school to get him the proper intervention program. With his tutoring and his accommodations and assistive technology plans in place he is having a good year.

I would ask you to please take 52 minutes of your time to watch this documentary about dyslexia.

www.EmbracingDyslexia.com (it is on line for anyone to view, scroll to the bottom of the page and you will see the video).

Please vote NO on HB 5111. Thank you for your time today in listening to my concerns. If you have any further questions or would like to know more about dyslexia, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Terra Walters

Proud Mom of 3 Michiganders!

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If you are reading this on your iPad, thank Steve Jobs who was a dyslexic thinker, if you are reading this on a Windows product, thank Bill Gates who was a dyslexic thinker. If you have a light on, thank the boy who came home with a note pinned to his shirt from his teacher that read, "this boy is too stupid to learn." That boy was Thomas Edison, yes a dyslexic.